



82ND TEXAS LEGISLATURE



BUDGET BALANCED WITHOUT RAISING TAXES

As we approached the 82nd legislative session, we faced a potential \$27 billion budget shortfall as a result of the worst national recession in 70 years. Sales tax revenue in Texas -- generally, the most relied-upon indicator of economic and fiscal health in our state -- declined for 13 straight months in 2009 and 2010.

The State of Texas response was to stay within available revenues without raising taxes, because Texas families were faced with similar economy at home. Less than a year after our 2009 session, state leaders called for budget cuts to keep expenditures within available revenues -- first, a 5% reduction, and then another 2.5%. Agency personnel were also instructed to prepare their upcoming two-year budgets (2012-2013) with less, and no new taxes being provided by the Legislature when the budget was being drafted.

Even in lean times and during one of the most difficult budget challenges our state has ever faced, legislators made Texas schoolchildren our highest priority.

Texans may be surprised to learn that the state budget finalized during the regular 140-day session, and the 30-day special session, will provide \$1.6 billion more dollars directly to our state's public schools than the last budget. Though we were not able to fund enrollment growth, in a year of real and deep budget cuts in most areas, our school districts will get a 5.6 percent increase in state funding, from \$27.6 billion in the current two-year budget cycle to \$29.2 billion for 2012-13.

However, overall general revenue spending is shrinking from \$82 billion in 2010-11 to \$80.6 billion in 2012-13, requiring real and large cuts in many other areas.

Other areas of the budget were reduced -- the natural resources budget was cut by 25 percent, general government operations by 19 percent, the judiciary by 13 percent, higher education by 9 percent, the Legislature by 9 percent, and public safety and criminal justice by 5 percent.

Every one of these reductions required hard choices, because the State of Texas simply can't spend more than it takes in.



Rep. Anderson gave an economic outlook and budget briefing to members of the **Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce** during session in March.



*Anchors aweigh! Doc meets with 2009 Robinson High School graduate Brandon Davis, son of Ed Davis and currently a MIDN 2-C at the **United States Naval Academy**.*

This year's budget was extraordinarily complicated. We all hope the economy recovers robustly, but with national unemployment back above 9 percent and recent headlines warning of "stalled growth," your state government must make prudent budget decisions.

With six months remaining in the current budget, cuts alone were not enough to balance the shortfall. Therefore, we used the rainy day fund to cover a deficit in the current (2010-11) budget cycle, caused by many factors, including lower-than-expected sales tax revenues. This is what the Rainy Day Fund was created for -- to cover revenue shortfalls in an already adopted, certified, and balanced budget.

Yet it was wise for the Legislature to preserve the fund's balance for what could be another difficult budget session in the next two years. Under federal laws that dictate much of the increasing health care spending, Texas may owe at least \$4 billion more for federal entitlements in the next budget cycle than we have budgeted. Thus, if the economy does not dramatically improve, health care expenditures alone may require most of the remaining rainy day funds. Additionally, we must be prepared for possible hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires.

Texas is better positioned than most states to deal with fiscal challenges because of our constitutional requirement of a balanced budget, coupled with determination to bring government spending in line with economic reality.



Doc welcomes Baylor University President Ken Starr and outreach Vice President Tommye Lou Davis to the Capitol for Baylor Day during session. Baylor Day is always a favorite for alumni and legislative alumni of Baylor.

ANDERSON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

I was honored by the opportunity to author and pass SJR 14 to extend homestead property tax exemptions to the surviving spouse of veterans with 100%, service-connected disability. We passed both the constitutional amendment and the enabling legislation (SB 516).

On November 8th this year, voters will be able to vote on the amendment to the Texas Constitution and grant the homestead property tax exemption to the surviving spouses. This provision would continue as long as the spouse does not remarry.

"When Texans voted in 2007 to grant a property tax exemption for the homesteads of our disabled veterans, we were all pleased, but our job was not complete," said Rep. Anderson. "It took the Legislature until 2009 to put the working parts of that law into practice, and the bill to grant that exemption to the surviving spouse upon the death of a veteran got bogged down."

If this amendment is approved by Texas voters, widows and widowers of veterans who previously qualified for this homestead property tax exemption based upon their service-connected total disability will be able to apply for the continuation of that property tax exemption in the 2012 tax year.

As we remember our brave heroes who have given their lives to guard our freedoms, let us not forget the many who also endured unimaginable sacrifices in service to our country, and the spouses who have cared so much, and so long, for them. I ask all Texans to vote on this constitutional amendment in November.

MCLENNAN COUNTY DELEGATION TEAMWORK PAYS OFF

I was pleased to work with Representative Marva Beck and Senator Brian Birdwell to preserve the Southern Trinity Groundwater Conservation District operation as a stand-alone entity. Gov. Perry signed the bill into law at the end of May.

The groundwater district, created in 2007, contained in its governing statute language which would have dissolved the district had McLennan County not joined up with one or more counties by September 1, 2011. Local stakeholders tried all avenues to bring other counties into the district, but all surrounding counties had joined water conservation districts in other regions.

Preserving the Southern Trinity Groundwater Conservation District was a top priority for all of us. Rep. Beck's co-authorship and key assistance on the House Natural Resources Committee, along with Senator Birdwell's timely work in the Senate, was a great first test of local teamwork, and passing that test was essential.

Sen. Birdwell said, "I'm so proud that this was the first of my bills to be signed into law on the Governor's desk. I felt it was imperative to see the legislature take action before the groundwater district was dissolved."

Rep. Marva Beck, who kept the bill from getting snagged in the House Natural Resources Committee, said, "This was the first bill I signed on to. It is important that we keep the Southern Trinity Groundwater District functioning in McLennan County. I stand with Sen. Birdwell and Doc Anderson as proud representatives of McLennan County." Great teamwork!!



Rep. Anderson, a co-author of HB 15 (sonogram bill) appears with primary bill author Rep. Sid Miller and co-author Rep. Bill Callegari as Governor Rick Perry announces the signing of this significant and important legislation.

"No man in the wrong can stand up to a fellow that's in the right and keeps on a-comin"
—Capt. Bill McDonald, Texas Rangers

REDISTRICTING

The Texas Constitution requires that legislators re-draw (re-apportion) district lines for state representative, state senate, US Congress, and State Board of Education maps after every 10-year census to reflect shifts and growth in population. While the number of state reps (150) and state senate (31) district remains constant, the number of federal Congressional seats is dictated by national population movement. Where many other states lost congressional seats due to dwindling populations, Texas gained, remarkably, 4 seats for a total of 36 members of Congress.

Given the various interests and considerations due to population shifts, drawing one map, let alone four maps, can prove a daunting task--and it's a task which has overwhelmed previous legislatures. However, the 82nd Legislature was able to draw new district lines for all four maps.

McLennan County impacts -- population changes have led to a new state representative district (District 12) in place of the old district (District 57). District 12 includes part of McLennan County, as well as part of Brazos County--along with all of Falls, Limestone, and Robertson counties. The



*During the legislative session, Rep. Anderson called a **Town Hall** meeting at the **Baylor University Law School**, to receive comments and answer questions from the home folks.*

70,000 people in McLennan County make up the largest population density of the district.

District 56 will include most of the western half of McLennan County, although the towns of Leroy, Ross, West, and Gholson will become part of the new District 12. District 56 picks up the city of Riesel.

OTHER LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

State and local leadership worked together to bring Coll Materials to Waco, a post-consumer plastics recycling company representing over 100 jobs and an estimated \$5.9 million infusion into the regional economy, through a \$550,000 investment by the Texas Enterprise Fund.

Critical structural funding for the TSTC Waco campus was secured by working with state budget writers, along with TSTC Waco President Elton Stuckly. Our office also passed legislation to enhance their administrative efficiency, and amended other legislation to keep bond-writing processes within the System working effectively.

Legislation was also passed to clarify functions and duties for the McLennan County Juvenile Board and the Waco Center for Youth.

COMING IN SEPTEMBER:
an analysis of the Constitutional Amendments on the November 8th ballot.



*Doc was honored to appear with **Renee Lynn Culpepper** at the dedication of the **David Culpepper Memorial Fire Station** in Moody, named in honor of the firefighter and great citizen of Moody who lost his battle with cancer.*



God Bless Texas!



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